

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01808 011352Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----076788 011355Z /66

O R 011226Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7402
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY OSLO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1808

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: LE, UN, MOPS
SUBJECT: SITUATION IN SOUTH

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF ON APRIL 1, UN SPOKESMAN
SAMIR SANBAR SAID THE FOLLOWING.

2. AS OF 1100 HOURS LOCAL TIME APRIL 1 THE CEASE-FIRE WAS
HOLDING.

3. AT PRESENT IT DID NOT APPEAR THAT THE FRENCH WOULD BE
ABLE TO GET CONTROL OF QASIMIYAH BRIDGE FROM THE
PALESTINIANS. SANBAR BLAMED THE FRENCH FOR THIS FAILURE.
HE SAID THE FRENCH HAD MADE A BIG PUBLIC ISSUE OF THE BRIDGE
AND HAD THEREFORE FORCED THE PALESTINIANS NOT TO GIVE IN.

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 01808 011352Z

SANBAR CLAIMED THE FRENCH COULD HAVE OCCUPIED THE
BRIDGE, IF THEY HAD NOT MADE ANY NOISE AND SIMPLY GONE
AHEAD AND DONE SO. (WE ARE SKEPTICAL.)

4. THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE MARCH 31 MEETING BETWEEN HOSS
AND ARAFAT HAD BEEN GOOD. IN CONTRAST, THE ATMOSPHERE
OF THEIR PREVIOUS MEETING HAD BEEN VERY TENSE. ARAFAT

IN HIS MARCH 31 MEETING HAD, AS THE PAPERS REPORTED, PROMISED AGAIN TO HELP UNIFIL CARRY OUT ITS MISSION. THE QUESTION NOW WAS NOT WHAT ARAFAT WAS SAYING, BUT WHAT HE WOULD DO. THE UN, FOR TACTICAL REASONS, WAS APPEARING TO TAKE ARAFAT AT HIS WORD -- THAT HE WOULD BE HELPFUL -- BUT ONE COULD NEVER KNOW WITH ARAFAT.

5. SANBAR ALSO REFERRED TO THE FACT THAT AN NAHAR AND AS SAFIR HAD REPORTED ISRAELI CHIEF OF STAFF GUR AS TELLING THE JERUSALEM POST THAT THE ISRAELI ATTACK HAD "MADE THE PLO PRACTICALLY A PARTNER IN ANY AGREEMENT IN THAT AREA." SANBAR SAID THAT IF GUR HAD ACTUALLY SAID THIS, IT MIGHT HAVE IMPORTANT EFFECTS ON THE CEASE-FIRE, ALTHOUGH SANBAR WAS NOT SURE HOW. SANBAR ALSO CLAIMED THAT ISRAEL RADIO'S ARABIC SERVICE, IN REPORTING ON THE MARCH 31 MEETING BETWEEN HOSS AND ARAFAT, HAD REFERRED TO THE LATTER AS "CHAIRMAN OF THE PLO" AND NOT CALLED HIM A "TERRORIST" FOR THE FIRST TIME IN RECENT MEMORY.

6. THE NORWEGIAN ROLE IN UNIFIL WAS BECOMING MORE AND MORE IMPORTANT. THE FIRST NORWEGIAN PLANE WAS DUE TO ARRIVE IN BEIRUT AT ABOUT 1500 HOURS ON APRIL 1 WITH 30 NORWEGIAN SOLDIERS. THE FIVE NORWEGIAN PLANES DUE TO ARRIVE APRIL 1-5 WOULD BRING ONLY ABOUT 150 MEN. THE REST WOULD LAND IN TEL AVIV.
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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 01808 011352Z

7. SANBAR SAID "A FEW" CIVILIAN REFUGEES HAD RETURNED TO THE SOUTH. (ABDUL RAHMAN SHAYKA, THE PRIME MINISTER'S PRIVATE SECRETARY, TOLD EMBOFF THAT ONLY 2,000 REFUGEES HAD RETURNED TO THE SOUTH, INCLUDING TYRE, AS OF MARCH 31.)
PARKER

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NNN

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